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November 20, 2002

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Director

SUBJECT: **BIOTERRORISM ACTION PLAN MONTHLY STATUS REPORT**

As requested by your Board, this is the monthly status report on activities related to the bioterrorism action plan.

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Funds—\$3.6 million

Responses are pending from Letters of Interest mailed to hospital CEOs regarding participation in the Hospital Bioterrorism Preparedness Program. To date, 71 of the 81 paramedic receiving hospitals have responded as follows:

Level of Commitment	% of Responding Hospitals
Basic Level	32%
Expanded Level	55%
Declined Participation	13%

The Agreements for these 9-1-1 receiving hospitals wanting to participate in the HRSA project are scheduled for consideration by your Board on December 10, 2002.

DHS Facilities Management has submitted a proposal to the CAO to lease a building as a Disaster Staging Facility for County-sponsored disaster response teams. In addition to HRSA funds, the backing for this project comes from a combination of response team grants with the State and Federal governments. To date, meetings have been held with the CAO and requested additional information and justification are being provided.

Public Health and EMS Agency staff have met with HealthCare Association of Southern California (HASC) and hospital representatives to begin development of a ReddiNet-based surveillance program. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and HRSA grants are targeted to fund different components of the project development and implementation.

Additional antibiotics have been ordered to treat another 25,000 exposures with a full 7-day regimen. If necessary, these could be distributed to more individuals with a shorter treatment period, expanding on overall response capability.

Nearly 90% of the hospitals, both public and private, participated in the Countywide Disaster Drill on November 14 with a focus on hospital preparation for a radiological terrorism events.

Numerous training sessions have been conducted for physicians and other hospital-based medical personnel as well as first responders, including force protection courses for law enforcement personnel. The first four 20-hour Hospital Decontamination Operations courses have been provided to hospitals planning to participate in the Expanded HRSA Hospital Contract.

A semi-annual report of the first six months of the grant was submitted to HRSA on November 1, 2002 as required.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Funds—\$24.6 million

The Department has completed the first draft of the Los Angeles County Smallpox Plan. The Plan will be reviewed at the November Bioterrorism Advisory Committee meeting for comments and input, and must be submitted to the CDC by December 1, 2002. Input will also be obtained from the HRSA Advisory Committee.

The Department is currently meeting with the Contracts and Grants Division to develop Bioterrorism Master Agreements to meet specific timelines outlined in the CDC Grant. These agreements will cover services and consultants for overall readiness efforts for the county.

The Department conducted an emergency communications drill for Public Health Directors/Managers on October 12. The purpose was to test the response time for Directors/Managers to call in to the County Operator when they were telephoned and/or paged by the new automated Health Alert System Training and Educational Network (HASTEN). The exercise yielded responses from two thirds of those called; 50% of the respondents called within ten minutes and 92% called within one hour. This activity is one of several communications exercises that will be conducted during the grant period.

The Public Health Laboratory and staff met with the CAO to discuss space issues for the proposed Rancho Los Amigos site for a renovated Public Health Laboratory. A seismic safety review of the site is being ordered by the CAO.

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Karen Willis, Los Angeles' Project Officer from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, met with the Bioterrorism Preparedness grant staff. Ms. Willis briefed staff on the expectations of the bioterrorism grant and received reports on progress being made toward the Critical Benchmarks identified in the grant. A report of the first six months of the grant was submitted to CDC on November 1, as required.

The Department is meeting with UCLA School of Public Health to assist in the assessment and training areas in the BT grant. UCLA is credentialed as one of the 15 academic institutions identified by CDC as a Center for Public Health Preparedness. CDC is encouraging jurisdictions nationwide to work with these institutions in meeting Critical Benchmarks in the grant.

Los Angeles County has received approval from the CDC to offer a local CDC-sponsored seminar on Forensics Epidemiology. This will bring together public health and law enforcement officials who would need to partner on investigations in the event of a bioterrorist event. The seminar will address legal and health issues associated with the conduct of joint investigations. In preparation for hosting the January seminar, Los Angeles staff traveled to North Carolina to observe the first one conducted nationally.

As requested, your Board will continue to be provided with monthly updates on these grants and terrorism preparedness activities. The Department continues to work with the CAO to ensure that grant funding is obtained and maximized properly. Please let me know if you have any questions.

TLG:vph
203:006 and C/R 111:005

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Director of Public Health
Fiscal Management